

Chapter V

Radical Feminism and Political Correctness

by

Dr. Gerald L. Atkinson

Perhaps no aspect of Political Correctness is more prominent in American life today than feminist ideology. Is feminism, like the rest of Political Correctness, based on the cultural Marxism imported from Germany in the 1930s? While feminism's history in America certainly extends longer than sixty years, its flowering in recent decades has been interwoven with the unfolding social revolution carried forward by cultural Marxists.

Where do we see radical feminism ascendant? It is on television, where nearly every major offering has a female "power figure" and the plots and characters emphasize inferiority of the male and superiority of the female. It is in the military, where expanding opportunity for women, even in combat positions, has been accompanied by double standards and then lowered standards, as well as by a decline in enlistment of young men, while "warriors" in the services are leaving in droves. It is in government-mandated employment preferences and practices that benefit women and use "sexual harassment" charges to keep men in line. It is in colleges where women's gender studies proliferate and "affirmative action" is applied in admissions and employment. It is in other employment, public and private, where in addition to affirmative action, "sensitivity training" is given unprecedented time and attention. It is in public schools, where "self awareness" and "self-esteem" are increasingly promoted while academic learning declines. And sadly, we see that "a woman's right to choose" leads many fellow Americans, including many with stewardship of public law and culture, to believe it is "the right thing to do" to allow the most helpless to be put to death.

While it is the theme of this essay that the radical feminist movement is embraced by present day Political Correctness ideology, derived from cultural Marxism, feminism as such does have earlier roots. Feminism was conceived and birthed in America in the 1830s, in the generation experiencing the first stage of the industrial revolution. Women, who for centuries had shared the challenges of surviving in an agrarian life, were becoming part of a middle-class gentry with more time and energy to spend writing newspaper articles and novels for their "sisters." The initial stages of the feminization of American culture had started.¹

These feminists, radical in their time, became a staple of the idealistic Transcendentalists, who included Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and many radical Unitarian ministers of the day. They were also abolitionists, bent on destroying slavery and Southern culture as well. Spurred by the rhetoric of Harriet Beecher Stowe (author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), Julia Ward Howe (author of the words to

¹ Douglas, Ann. *The Feminization of American Culture*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1977.

“The Battle Hymn of the Republic”), and Margaret Fuller (the first radical feminist newspaper columnist), the men and women of this idealist Transcendentalist generation propelled our nation toward Civil War.

Who were these Transcendentalist idealists, and why should we be reminded of them today? They were the precursors of today’s idealistic Boomer generation. While we cannot draw a continuous link between the Transcendentalists and today’s Boomers, their characteristics are very similar. We may glimpse where the elite Boomers are leading us by reviewing the history of the Transcendentalists and their causes.

The Transcendentalists supported abolition of slavery, women’s rights, temperance, pacifism (but not in the anti-slavery cause), and other causes which we now observe in New Age popular culture. They developed into spiritualism (talking with the dead), Eastern mysticism and phrenology (discerning personality by the shape of one’s skull). They would be right at home in today’s New Age milieu. Luther George Williams points out, referring to women’s groups and civil rights groups that:

Freed slaves secured the vote only after the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments (ratified in 1870), but women fared worse. They did not receive the vote until the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920. However, the substantial political victories that these groups achieved (during the Civil War period) guaranteed that they would remain allies. Today, their political organizations dominate every aspect of society, politics and education in America – including the military.²

Indeed, the present-day radical feminist assault on VMI and the Citadel has a political parallel to the Transcendentalist activism of the Civil War period. This current assault is in part a continuation of a century-old effort to destroy Southern culture.

In contrast to today’s radical feminists, social feminists of the 1890s and early 20th century were of a less totalitarian character. They stood for women’s suffrage but also advocated the strengthening of the family.

Today, the feminization of American culture, moving rapidly since the 1960s continues to intensify. Radical Feminists demand that women be allowed to “choose” entry to the infantry, artillery, special forces and combat engineering positions in the Army and Marine Corps. These demands follow the Feminization of combat aviation in the U.S. Navy, Air Force and Army since 1993.

The feminization of American politics was advanced in the 1996 presidential election, when parties produced “feminized” conventions featuring soft, emotional, Oprah Winfrey-type orations and sentimental film clips of the presidential candidates. Both candidates were portrayed as soft, gentle, emotion-driven creatures sufficiently in touch with their feelings that all women across America would feel “comfortable” in their

² Williams, Luther George. *A Place for Theodore: The Murder of Dr. Theodore Parkman*. Holly Two Leaves, 1977. p. 161.

care.³ With 60 million female votes at stake, both parties pandered to America's "feminine" side.⁴

There is no doubt in the media that the "man of today" is expected to be a touchy-feely subspecies who bows to the radical feminist agenda. He is a staple of Hollywood, the television network sitcoms and movies, and the political pundits of talk shows.⁵ The feminization is becoming so noticeable that newspapers and magazines are picking up on it. For example, the *Washington Times* and *National Review* magazines combined to tell us that "behind the breezy celebration of 'guy stuff' in today's men's magazine lurks a crisis of confidence. What does it mean to be masculine in the 90s?" It is revealed that today's men's magazines (*Esquire*, *GQ*, *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness*, *Men's Journal*, *Details*, *Maxim*, *Men's Perspective*) "are all geared to a new feminized man...."⁶ Some examples? The old masculine attitude toward personal appearance is disappearing. If memory serves, our fathers' acts of personal upkeep were mostly limited to shaving and putting on a tie. According to Lowry:

[I]t's hard to imagine [them] interested in articles on 'A Flat Belly for the Beach' (Verge), or the three new men's fragrances for the fall season (GQ), or even 'The New Fall Suit' (Esquire). But somewhere along the line men became less concerned with being strong and silent, and more worried about making themselves pretty.⁷

Indeed the feminization of American culture is nearly completed. And the last bastion of male domination, the U.S. military, is under assault.

If this "feminization" trend were driven only by radical feminists seeking to pull down a perceived male-dominated hierarchy, there would be more hope that the cycles of history would move America toward a stable accommodation between men and women. But the drive is deeper, and it will not be satisfied by any accommodation. The radical feminists have embraced and been embraced by the wider and deeper movement of cultural Marxism. For dedicated Marxists, the strategy is to attack at every point where an apparent disparity leaves a potential constituency of "oppressed" persons – in this case women, who are the largest of all constituencies. Cultural Marxists, men and women, are making the most of it, and the theory developed by the Frankfurt School provides the ideology.

The Frankfurt School theorized that the authoritarian personality is a product of the patriarchal family. This idea is in turn directly connected to Engels's *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, which promotes matriarchy. Furthermore, it

³ Kristol, Irving. "The Feminization of the Democrats." *The Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 9, 1996. Kristol reported that 50% of the Democratic convention delegates were women. Women were described as tending to be more sentimental, more risk-adverse, and less competitive than men, and also more permissive and less judgmental.

⁴ Blair, Anita. Independent Women's Forum. "Mitchells in the Morning," NET-TV, Dec. 5, 1996.

⁵ Cladwell, Christopher. "The Feminization of America." *Weekly Standard*, Dec. 23, 1996.

⁶ Culture, et Cetera. "Sissifaction." *The Washington Times*, Oct. 17, 1997.

⁷ Lowry, Rich. "Ab Nauseum." *National Review*, Oct. 13, 1997

was Karl Marx who wrote in *The Communist Manifesto* about the radical notion of a “community of women.” He also, in 1845, wrote disparagingly in his *The German Ideology* of the idea that the family was the basic unit of society.

The concept of the “authoritarian personality” is not just to be interpreted primarily as a model for the conduct of warfare against prejudice as such. It is a handbook for psychological warfare against the American male, to render him unwilling to defend traditional beliefs and values. In other words, the aim was to emasculate him. Undoubtedly the Institute for Social Research at Frankfurt University meant this, as it used the term “psychological techniques for changing personality.”

The “authoritarian personality,” studied in the 1940s and 1950s by American followers of the Frankfurt School, prepared the way for such psychological warfare against the male gender role. The aim was promoted by Herbert Marcuse and others under the guise of “women’s liberation” and under the New Left movement in the 1960s. Evidence that psychological techniques for changing personality are intended to focus in particular on the emasculation of the American male has also been provided by Abraham Maslow, founder of “third force humanist psychology” and promoter of psychotherapeutic techniques in public school classrooms.⁸ He wrote that “the next step in personal evolution is a transcendence of both masculinity and femininity to general humanness.”⁹

Cultural Marxist stalwarts apparently know exactly what they want to do and how they plan to do it. They have actually already succeeded in accomplishing much of their agenda.

How did this situation come about in American universities? Gertrude Himmelfarb has observed that it slipped past traditional academics almost unobserved until it was too late. It occurred so “quietly” that when they “looked up”, postmodernism was upon them with a vengeance. “They were surrounded by such a tidal wave of faddish multicultural subjects such as radical feminism, deconstructed relativism as history and other courses” which undermine the perpetuation of Western civilization.¹⁰ Indeed, this tidal wave slipped by just as Antonio Gramsci and the Frankfurt School had envisioned – a quiet revolution that could not be resisted by force.

The Frankfurt School had devised the concept of designating the opponents of the Marxist cultural revolution as “authoritarian characters.” According to available accounts:

There was a meeting of American scholars at a conference on religious and racial prejudice in 1944. Over the next five years, a Frankfurt School team under the

⁸ See “Hidden Danger in the Classroom” Pearl Evans, Small Helm Press, 1990. The authors of this classroom approach have since disavowed it, but it continues on in public and other schools.

⁹ Raehn, Raymond V. “The Roots of Affective Education in American Schools.” March 1995. p. 17.

¹⁰ Himmelfarb, Gertrude. Panel on “Academic Reform: Internal Sources.” National Association of Scholars, Sixth General Conference, May 3-5, 1996.

direction of Max Horkheimer conducted in-depth social and psychological profiles of Americans under a project entitled “Studies of Prejudice.” One of the results was a book entitled “The Authoritarian Personality” by Theodor Adorno, et al, that summarized one of the largest public opinion surveys ever undertaken in the United States. It was published in 1950, and conformed to the original Critical Theory in every respect. As a document which testified to the belief system of the Frankfurt School revolutionaries it was essentially anti-God, anti-Christian, anti-family, anti-nationalist, anti-patriot, anti-conservative, anti-hereditarian, anti-ethnocentric, anti-masculine, anti-tradition, and anti-morality. All of these are elements in critical theory.¹¹

“Cultural Marxism,” as preached by the Frankfurt School alumni in the U.S., is being implemented by the elite Boomers. This has laid the foundation for and spurred the widely popular and destructive concepts of “affirmative action,” “multiculturalism” and “diversity.” One can’t escape these terms today. They have grown from the study of anti-Semitism and discrimination by the Institute for Social Research during the 1940s and the systematic infusion of the language of “discrimination,” “civil rights,” “women’s rights,” and other “minority rights” into American culture.

According to Raehn:

Critical Theory as applied mass psychology has led to the deconstruction of gender in the American culture. Following Critical Theory, the distinction between masculinity and femininity will disappear. The traditional roles of the mothers and fathers are to be dissolved so that patriarchy will be ended. Children are not to be raised according to their biological genders and gender roles according to their biological differences. This reflects the Frankfurt School rationale for the disintegration of the traditional family.¹²

Thus, one of the basic tenets of Critical Theory was the necessity to break down the traditional family. The Frankfurt School scholars preached:

Even a partial breakdown of parental authority in the family might tend to increase the readiness of a coming generation to accept social change.¹³

The transformation of American culture envisioned by the cultural Marxists goes further than pursuing gender equality. Embodied in their agenda is “matriarchal theory,” under which they purpose to transform American culture to be female-dominated. This is a direct throwback to Wilhelm Reich, a Frankfurt School member who considered matriarchal theory in psychoanalytic terms. In 1993, he wrote in “The Mass Psychology of Fascism” that matriarchy was the only genuine family type of “natural society.”

¹¹ Raehn, Raymond V. “Critical Theory: A Special Research Report.” April 1, 1996.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Jay, Martin. *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute for Social Research, 1923 – 1950*. University of California Press, 1973.

Erich Fromm, another charter member of the Institute, was one of the most active advocates of matriarchal theory. Fromm was especially taken with the idea that all love and altruistic feelings were ultimately derived from the maternal love necessitated by the extended period of human pregnancy and postnatal care:

Love thus was not dependent on sexuality, as Freud had supposed. In fact, sex was more often tied to hatred and destruction. Masculinity and femininity were not reflections of “essential” sexual differences, as the romantics had thought. They were derived instead from differences in life functions, which were in part socially determined.¹⁴

This dogma was a precedent for today’s radical feminist pronouncements appearing in newspapers and in TV programs, including TV newscasts. For its promoters, male and female roles result from cultural indoctrination – an indoctrination carried out by the male patriarchy to the detriment of women.

Indeed, cultural Marxism has, in the 1990s, melded with radical feminism in the elite Boomer generation, that throwback to the dangerous Transcendentalists of the early 19th century. A cauldron of discontent is forming in our nation, a discontent which has the potential to dismantle American civilization.

Destructive criticism of primary elements of American culture inspired the 1960s counter-culture revolution. Idealistic Boomers coming of age strove to transform the prevailing culture into its opposites, in the spirit of social revolution. Now the elite Boomers are in positions of power, and they are working to destroy the nation’s historic institutions. They aim to destroy as well the heritage we call “Western Civilization.”

Richard Bernstein has written in his book on multiculturalism, “the Marxist revolutionary process for the past several decades in America has centered on race and sex warfare rather than class warfare” as in earlier times.¹⁵ This reflects a scheme more total than economics to restructure American society. As the social revolutionaries readily proclaim, their purpose is to destroy the hegemony of white males. To accomplish this, all barriers to the introduction of more women and minorities throughout the “power structure” are to be brought down by all means available. Laws and lawsuits, intimidation, and demonizing of white males as racists and sexists are pursued through the mass media and the universities. The psycho–dynamic of the revolutionary process aim for psychic disempowerment – decapitation – of those who oppose.

Steve Forbes has emphasized:

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Bernstein, Richard. *The Dictatorship of Virtue: Multiculturalism and the Battle for America’s Future*. Knopf, 1994.

This country's founders recognized three primal values in the Declaration of Independence, and they ranked them properly: Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.¹⁶

Forbes observes that if the order of these fundamental human rights is switched – with happiness before liberty or liberty before life – we come to moral chaos and social anarchy.

This very condition is what Judge Robert Bork describes as “modern liberalism.” He defines its characteristics as “‘radical egalitarianism’ (equality of outcomes rather than of opportunities) and ‘radical individualism’ (the drastic reduction of limit to personal gratification).”¹⁷

Judge Bork also identifies radical feminism as “the most destructive and fanatical” element of this modern liberalism. He further describes radical feminism as “totalitarian in spirit.”

Most Americans do not realize that they, through their institutions, are being led by social revolutionaries who think in terms of the continuing destruction of the existing social order in order to create a new one. The revolutionaries are New Age Elite Boomers.¹⁸ They now control the public institutions in the United States. Their “quiet” revolution, beginning with the counter-culture revolution of their youth, is nearing completion. A key, or even a dominant element because purportedly it represents that largest political and social constituency among their potential followers, is feminism. The Marxist movement in its “quiet” cultural latter-day phase is seemingly sweeping all before it. With its sway over the media, fully in the grip of feminism, it is hard to discern the stirrings of a counter-culture. Are the elite Boomers, the New Totalitarians, the most dangerous generation in America's history? William Strauss and Neil Howe suggest so, in their book *Generations: The History of America's Future – 1584 – 2069*.¹⁹ James Kurth writes:

The United States itself has become a great power that opposes much of what was once thought of as Western Civilization, especially its cultural achievements and its social arrangements. The major American elites – those in power in politics, business, the media, and academia – now use American power, especially the “soft power” of information, communications, and popular entertainment, to displace Western Civilization not only in America but also in Europe.²⁰

¹⁶ Snow, Tony. “Moral of the Story: Forbes Virtue Stance.” *The Washington Times*, Oct. 27, 1997. Mr. Snow reports on an article by Forbes in the November 1997 *Policy Review* magazine.

¹⁷ Bork, Robert H. *Slouching Towards Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline*. Harper Collins, 1996.

¹⁸ Atkinson, Gerald L. *The New Totalitarians: Bosnia as a Mirror of America's Future*. Atkinson Associated Press, 1996.

¹⁹ Strauss, William and Neil Howe. *Generations: the History of America's Future*. William Morrow & Co., 1991.

²⁰ Kurth, James. “NATO Expansion and the ideas of the West.” *Western Civ in World Politics, Orbis Magazine*, Fall 1997.

Will American men, of every race, and more traditionalist women of every age and circumstances – who may well be a silent majority of their sex – rise to challenge Political Correctness? Or will American men continue in voluntary submission toward a future of peonage under a new American matriarchy? Would that be a precursor to a condition of anarchy, and an end to America's experiment with democracy? It may well be that the fate of American civilization depends on American men steadfastly resisting Politically Correct feminism. Even more, they must resourcefully oppose the wider grip of Political Correctness, the cultural Marxism for which radical feminism is only one avenue of attack.